OPEN ACCESS

IOASD Journal of Business and Management Studies

IOASD J Bus Manag Stud, Vol-1, Iss-1, Jan-Mar., 2024
Frequency: Quarterly
ISSN: 3048-7595 (Online)
ISSN: 3049-0510 (Print)
Homepage: https://ioasdpublisher.com/ioasdjbms

Personal Variables and Students' Perception of School Security in Secondary Schools in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria

Prof James Bassey Eje[1*], Dr. Dorn Cklaimz Enamhe[2]
[1]Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Calabar
[2]Department of social works. University of Calabar

Corresponding Author: Prof James Bassey Eje
Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Calabar.

DOI: 10.67224/ioasdjbms.2024.v01i01.002

ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of personal variables such as sex, type of school and parental socio-economic status on secondary school students' perception of school security. To guide the study, three null hypotheses were formulated. The research design adopted was the survey design and a 20-item instrument was constructed and validated by the researchers through test-retest procedure. The sample size for the study comprised 2,198 students made up of male and female students selected through stratified random sampling technique. This was drawn from a study population of 21,988, made up of 12,635 students and 9353 students from public and private secondary schools respectively. Data were analyzed using independent t-test statistical tool. The findings showed that female students were more fearful in their perception of school security; the students in private schools perceived school to be more insecure than those in public schools; and the students from high parental socio-economic status are more associated with the perception of school as insecure than the ones from low parental socio-economic status. Based on these findings it was recommended that, among others, more reassuring measures be put in place to check school security for the females, for those in private schools and those from high parental socio-economic status. School counsellors should also be guided accordingly in designing intervention strategies.

Keywords: personal variables, students, perception, school security.

Original Research Article

Article History
Received: 08-01-2024
Accepted: 29-02-2024
Published: 05-03-2024

Copyright © 2024 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution **4.0 International License (CC BY-NC)** which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.

INTRODUCTION

There is a growing concern about security in school among parents, students, government, education managers, and even non-state actors. This concern has assumed a global dimension with a sense of urgency because the situation has transcended beyond threat to actual multidimensional violence. Schools, particularly secondary schools are presently witnessing various acts of violence which include sexual violence, cyber violence like stalking, bullying both physically and cyber bullying, kidnapping, physical assault, gun violence, among others. Many commentators have blamed the rising state of insecurity in our schools on drugs and cultism, while others say it is due to the negative impact of technology, general moral decay, religious extremism and banditry.

The consequences of these acts of violence that can create a sense of insecurity in schools can just be imagined. In Nigeria, some schools are public owned and others are private. However, concerns about school safety affect them all. This is because the state of insecurity in school can lead to absenteeism and dropout (Bradshaw et al, 2014). In school safety literature, you find that bullying, which Volk, Dane, & Marini (2014, p.35) define as "aggressive, goal directed behavior that harms another individual within the context of a power in balance" creates a huge sense of insecurity that can lead to depression and suicide. Also, it has become common knowledge that the feeling of being unsafe in school has a negative impact on academic performance. Other factors that account for insecurity in school include the social climate. Student-student relationship as well as teacher-student relationship have huge impacts on feelings of insecurity in school. The relationship between parents /students/teachers, if positive, can create a feeling of belongingness and predict school safety in addition to the school safety indicators Akiba (2010) identified.

In the past decade, various acts of violence in schools have been well documented in many parts of the world and identified as factors responsible for insecurity in schools. For instance, the Su-Min & Dong-Joo (Feb

28, 2023) report a surge in bullying in schools which has been a major problem for South Korean schools. According to the Education Ministry 9,792 cases of bullying were received for deliberations in the first semester after COVID-19 lock down. Between 2013 and 2020 verbal bullying accounted for 36% of School violence, and physical bullying accounted for 10.7%. In the same period Stalking accounted for 5.7%. In the United States of America (US), the statistics are scary in dimension. The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention gave the following summary after a 2019 nation-wide Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) was administered to high school students across the US. According to YRBS results from 13,677 students:

- About 1 in 5 high school students reported being bullied on school property in the last year.
- 8% of high school students had been in a physical fight on school property one or more times during the 12 months before the survey.
- More than 7% of high school students had been threatened or injured with a weapon (for example, a gun, knife or club) on school property one or more times during the 12 months before the survey.
- Almost 9% of high school students had not gone to school at least one day during the last 30 days before the survey because they felt they would be unsafe at school or on their way to or from school.
- Another report of tracked school shooting by Education week indicates that from 2018-2021 there were 68 shootings in schools in the US with many fatalities (Diaz, 2022).

School violence and the attendant insecurity is wide spread in the world. In the United Kingdom, Snowdon (2019) reports that assault in school premises soared by 72% in four years, with 27,805 reports received by the police from 2015- July, 2019. The yearly distribution is as shown graphically below:

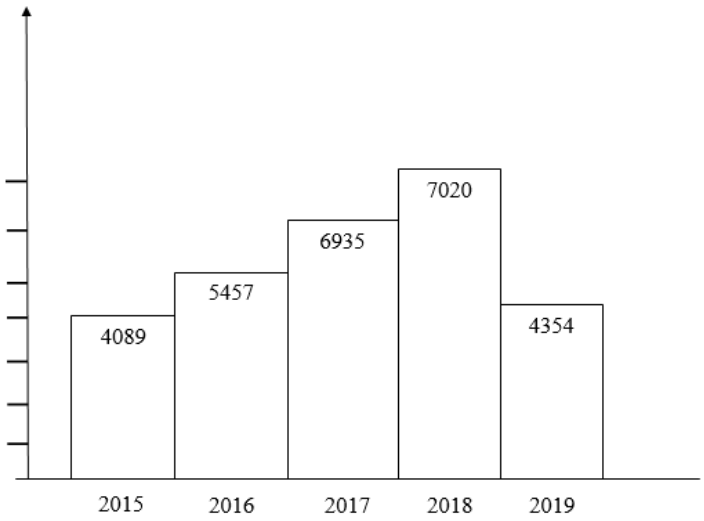

Figure-1: Number of Assaults Reported each year

It is worthy of note that in the UK the victims of school violence are teachers majorly.

The schools in Africa are as unsafe as the schools in other parts of the world. In South Africa the statistics for 2022/23 alone reveal the horrifying figures of 83 rapes and 19 murders committed on school premises including primary, special schools and tertiary institutions (Zyl, 2022). However, the report also indicates 411 gang-related incidents in 2022.The challenge of school violence and insecurity in Nigeria is complicated. Many of the Cases are unreported and among the reported ones, they range from rape, gang violence, Cultism, bullying, physical assault to religious extremism and kidnapping for ransomed. For instance, the United Nations Children's fund, UNICEF, says 85% of Nigerian children between ages of I and 14 experience violent discipline in school (Umeh, 2022). In addition, Eghagha (2021), a newspaper columnist, had reported bullying and violence in secondary schools in Nigeria. The menace is said to be more severe in elitist schools, according to the report. Extreme violent acts have also been carried out in Nigerian schools. It has been well documented that the Boko Haram religious fundamental group rejects western education which it sees as evil. The official name of the Islamic religious sect is Jama'at Ahlas-Sunnah Lid-Da-awah Wa'l-Jihad and in Arabic it translates as people committed to the propagation of the prophet's teachings and Jihad (Wikipedia, 2023). However, the residents of Maiduguri dubbed the sect as Boko Haram when its activities became bolder by the day and the term in the local Hausa language simply means western education is forbidden or sin. The residents gave the name because the sect viewed western education as corrupting and condemned it violently (Ekanem, Dada & Ejue, 2012). As a consequence,

schools have been attacked leaving many children either dead or kidnapped. A case in point is the kidnapping of 276 girls from Government Secondary School, Chibok in Borno state, Nigeria in 2014 which drew worldwide condemnation. Also, in 2021 317 school girls were kidnapped by bandits from Government Girls Secondary School, Jangebe in Talata Mafara Local Government Area of Zamfara State and later 279 were released after an undisclosed ransom was paid (Maishanu, 2021). The boys have not been spared either in school kidnappings. On the 11th of December, 2020 school boys were kidnapped by Boko Haram in a raid on a rural school, Government Science School, Kankara, Katsina State, Nigeria. Authorities were unsure of the number of victims but 344 of the boys were released a week later and the government denied that any ransom was paid (Akinwotu, 2020). Bombings, shootings and kidnappings have also been reported in several schools in Nigeria as reported by Abubakar (2014), Benjamin (2023), among others. The cases of rape and murder of school children in school premises are also well documented. The reports can be found in the Guardian Nigeria (15 March, 2018), Agbo (2019), BBC News pidgin (2022) just to cite a few.

In Cross River State, cases of violence against school children that are capable of rendering the schools insecure have been reported also. These cases include communal clashes like the one that happened in Nko in Yakurr Local Government Area in June 222. Students in four secondary schools abandoned school because of fear of being killed (Asare, 2022). In an earlier development, in March 2021, four secondary school students were arrested on alleged cult-related activities on the premises of the school (Edem, 2021). A 17-year-old female student was also arrested on 19th February, 2021 after being caught with a gun which she took to a school in Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State to shoot a teacher who insisted that she cuts her hair and the student confessed to being a member of a secret cult (Okoro, 2021).

Personal variables refer to the characteristics and attributes that an individual possesses or that can be ascribed to an individual. Some personal variables such as sex and socio-economic status could influence perception of school security just as the ownership, that is, public or private, can influence perception of school security. The security challenges faced by boys and girls in school do differ because vulnerability to various security threats could depend on sex. For instance, the girls have tended to be targets of sexual violence more than the boys, while the prevalence of cult violence tends to affect the boys more. Also, since private schools in Nigeria are more expensive than the public schools, the general notion among the populace is that the former are for the rich while the later are for the poor. So those who kidnap for ransom are more likely to target the private schools. In Nigeria, the minimum wage is 30,000 naira per month. Therefore, in this study, the students whose parent's combined income per month is 720,000 or below are considered to be low socio-economic status. All these variables could affect perception of school security. The question is, how do these variables influence perception of school security among students in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State. It is the attempt to answer this question that necessitated this study.

Statement of the problem

It is incontrovertible that schools in many parts of the world have become unsafe due to many factors. These cases of violent acts affect both males and females as well as the poor and the rich. In recent times, it has been seen that even the location of a school whether in urban or rural area is no longer a determinant of safety in the school. Anxiety and fear generally affect all irrespective of sex or social standing. Research also shows that anxiety and fear affect academic performance. Also, governments, international organizations, non-state actors, school managers and parents have taken several steps to make schools safer. However, not much is known about the perception of the school children themselves of the security in school and there are the central figures in the whole enterprise of schooling. An understanding of the students' perception of school security will go a long way in helping to put in place effective strategies that will make our schools safer. That is why this study was designed to find out the perception of school security by students by sex, type of school (that is, public or private) and parental socio-economic status. So the personal variables under study are sex, status of school in terms of ownership and parental socio-economic status.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses gave direction to the study:

1. Male and female students do not differ significantly in their perception of school security.
2. Public and private school students do not differ significantly in their perception of school security.
3. Parental socio-economic status does not significantly influence students' perception of school security.

METHOD

Research Design

This study adopted the survey design in which questionnaires were used to collect data from respondents on the influence of the independent variable (Sex, school type and parental socio-economic status) on the dependent variable (perception of school security), which were already present.

Sample

The sample of this study comprised 796 male students and 1402 female students selected through stratified random sampling technique. They were selected from the 19 public and 64 private secondary schools in Calabar Municipality. The sample was drawn

from a study population of 7,969 males and 14,019 females. The scope of the study did not account for age range.

Instrumentation

A two-part questionnaire consisting of 20 items on perception of school security was constructed for this study. Part one of the instrument is on personal demographic information like name of school, sex, parental income range.

Part two is made up of questions with a 4-point Likert type scale ranging from strongly agree (four point for positively worded items) to strongly disagree (one point for positively worded items) and the reverse for negatively worded items. The reliability of the instrument was established using test-retest method on 100 subjects, who eventually did not participate in the study, within an interval of two weeks. The instrument was found to be reliable with a reliability coefficient of .72.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using independent t-test statistical analysis to find if a significant difference exists between the two groups compared in each hypothesis.

RESULTS

The results are presented in table 1-3.

Hypothesis one

Male and female students do not differ significantly in their perception of school security. The independent variable is male and female students while school security serves as the dependent variable. To test the hypothesis, the scores of the two groups of respondents were collated and compared to check their perception of the dependent variable (school security). Independent t-test statistics was employed for data analysis. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of data and independent t-test that male and female students do not differ significantly in their perception of school security in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State.

Variable	N	X	SD	t	p-value
Males	796	33.92	3.62	34.07	.000*
Females	1402	28.92	3.12		

p<.05, DF=2196

The result in table 1 show that there is a difference in the mean score as well as in the standard deviation scores of both groups of respondents. The mean score of female students is (33.92) and the mean score of male students is (28.98), this shows that female students with low mean score fear more in their perception of school security. Similarly, calculated t-value of 34.07 representing the difference between male and female students on their perception of school security was significant at p-value of .000 at .05 level of significance with 2196 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This therefore implies that the male and female students do differ significantly in their perception of school security in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State.

Hypothesis two

Public and private schools' students do not differ significantly in their perception of school security. The independent variable is public and private schools' students while school security serves as the dependent variable. To test the hypothesis, the scores of the two groups of respondents were collated and compared to check their perception of the dependent variable (school security). Independent t-test statistics was employed for data analysis. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of data and independent t-test that public and private schools' students do not differ significantly in their perception of school security in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State.

Variable	N	X	SD	t	p-value
Public	1263	32.95	4.04	38.26	.000*
Private	935	27.73	1.23		

p<.05, DF=2196

The result in table 2 shows that there is a difference in the mean score as well as in the standard deviation scores of both groups of respondents. The mean score of public-school students is (32.95) and the mean score of private school students is (27.73), this shows that private school students with low mean score fear more in their perception of school security. Similarly, calculated t-value of 38.26 representing the difference between public and private schools' students on their perception of school security was significant at p-value of .000 at .05 level of significance with 2196 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This therefore implies that the public and private schools' students do differ significantly in their perception of school security in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State.

Hypothesis three

Parental socio-economic status does not significantly influence student's perception of security at school. The independent variable is parental socio-economic status while school security serves as the dependent variable. To test the hypothesis, the scores of the two groups of respondents were collated and compared to check their perception of the dependent variable (school security). Independent t-test statistics was employed for data analysis. The result is presented on Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of data and independent t-test that the students do not differ parental significantly in their perception of school security based on their parental socio-economic status in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State.

Variable	N	X	SD	t	p-value
Poor	1200	33.23	3.95	42.22	.000*
Rich	998	27.73	1.24		

p<.05, DF=2196

The result in table 3 shows that there is a difference in the mean score as well as in the standard deviation scores of both groups of respondents. The mean score of students from low parental socio-economic status is 33.23 and the mean score of students from high parental socio-economic status is 27.73, this shows that students from low parental socio-economic status with low mean score fear more in their perception of school security. Similarly, calculated t-value of 42.22 representing the difference between students from high parental socio-economic status and students from low parental socio-economic status in their perception of school security was significant at p-value of .000 at .05 level of significance with 2196 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This therefore implies that the parental socio-economic status significantly influences students' perception of security at school in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State.

DISCUSSION

Analysis of data relating to hypothesis one indicates that female students expressed more fear about their perception of school security. This implies that the female students perceive the school to be more insecure than their male counterparts. They fear bullying, fear stalking, fear the likelihood of being attacked, fear being kidnapped and fear being raped. A closer look at the mean difference shows that for the items on fear of school shooting and cult-related violence, the males and females do not differ significantly in their perception of school security. This result is not surprising because the females are more vulnerable to the acts studied that make the school insecure. This is in tandem with the most daring and notorious incident if kidnapping of 276 school girls in 2014 in Government Secondary School, Chibok in Bornu State as reported in Wikipedia and the kidnap of about 300 school girls in 2021 in Government Girls Secondary School, Jangebe in Talata Mafara Local Government Area of zamfara State (Maishanu,2021).

The females are more vulnerable even in respect of rape. Agbo (2019) agrees and says this menace is on the rise in Nigeria.

The statistical analysis of data on hypothesis two indicates that the students in private secondary schools fear more in their perception of school security than those in public secondary schools. This finding is not surprising because most cases of kidnapping in Nigeria are for ransom and private institutions of learning seem to be reserved for the elites and they are the ones who are more aware of security breaches in schools and as such, more sensitive because they have access to satellite television and other media that broadcast cases of school insecurity. Therefore, the students in private schools who are mostly elites are understandably more fearful in their perception of school safety. Even the study by Eghagha (2021) confirms that bullying and other forms of violence are present in Nigerian schools and the menace is more severe in elitist schools.

The result of data analysis for hypothesis three shows that parental socio-economic status has a significant influence on perception of school security. This finding is consistent with an adage that says 'he that is down needs fear no fall'. Due to cost disparity, it is the children from low parental socio-economic status that are mostly found in public schools in Nigeria, while those from high parental socio-economic status are mostly found in private schools. When it comes to kidnap for ransom, the students from high parental socio-economic status are more vulnerable because they have a higher kidnap value. Also the students from high parental socio-economic status tend to be gentler due to their protected upbringing, and as such people tend to take advantage of them and induce fear in them while at school. Further, the students from high parental socio-economic status are more likely to have more material possessions than those from low parental socio-economic status. These combined factors are likely to make them subjects of stalking, bullying, attacks and kidnapping. Therefore, they have more cause to perceive the school as insecure. The report by Eghagha (2021) that bullying and other forms of violence are more prevalent in elitist schools lends credence to this finding of this research.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated perception of school security among secondary school students in Calabar Municipality. Personal variables such as sex, type of school and parental socio-economic status were considered in comparing the perception of school secondary security. Based on the findings, the researchers are concluding that male and female students do differ in their perception of school security with the females being more fearful in their perception; students in public and private schools do differ in their perception of school security with those in private schools being more fearful in their perception; and the students from low and high parental socio-economic status also differ in their perception of school security with those from high parental socio-economic status found to be more fearful in their perception. It is therefore recommended that more reassuring measures be put in place to check the factors that threaten school security for the females, for those in private schools and those from high parental socio-economic status. It is also recommended that school counsellors be guided accordingly in designing intervention strategies. Finally, this research should be replicated in other parts of Nigeria and the implications on academy performance should be investigated too.

REFERENCES

- Abubakar, A (2014). Bombing at Northern Nigeria school leaves at least 8 dead, 20 injured**.** *Los Angeles Times,* June 22, 2014. www.latimes.com.
- Agbo, M.C. (2019). Child rape in Nigeria: implications on the education of the child. *Children and Teenagers,* 2(1), 13-31.
- Akiba, M. (2010). Indicators of school crime and safety: 2004: Washington, DC: National Centre for Education Statistics, Bureau of Justice. https://dio.org/10.1177/016146811011200110.
- Akinwontu, E. (2020). Group of 344 kidnapped Nigerian schoolboys handed to government. *The guardian,* 17 December, 2020. https://nww.the guardian.com –dec….
- Asare, A. (2022). School children in war torn Cross River community lament inability to take examinations. *Daily Post,* June 29, 2022. https://dailypost.ng> 2022/06/29-school-children in ….
- BBC News Pidgin. (28 July, 2022). kano court sentence school owner to death for murder of Hanifa Abubakar. https://www.bbc.com>articles.
- Benjamin, l. (2023). Just –in: Bandits kidnap 10 students from Kaduna school. Leadership. https://leadership.ng-News.
- Bradshaw, C. P., Waasdorp, T.E., Debnam, K.J., and Johnson, S.L. (2014). Measuring School climate in high schools: a focus on safety, engagement and environment**.** *J.Sch. Health,* 84, 593 – 604.doi:10.1111/josh.12186.
- Center For Disease Control. (2019). Youth risk behavior survey. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov>youthviolence, April 8, 2023.
- Diaz, J. (2022). 27 school shootings have taken place so far this year. https://www.npr.org>2022/05/24.
- Edem, E. (2021). 4 Govt secondary school students arrested over alleged cultism. *Daily Post,* March 06, 2021. https://dailypost.ng 2021/03/06>4- govt-secondary ….
- Eghagha, H.0. (2021). Bullying and violence in secondary schools. *The Guardian*, 23 December, 2021. https:guardian.ng>opinion.
- Ekanem, S.A., Dada, J.A. & Ejue, J.B. (2012). Boko Haram and amnesty: A philo-legal appraisal. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(4), 231-244.
- Maishanu, A.A. (2021). 279 of the kidnapped Jangebe school girls freed*. Premium Times Nigeria*, March 2,2021. https://www.premuimtimesng.com ….
- Okoro, J. (2021). Cross River school girl, 17, boyfriend confess being cultists. *The sun*, 19th February https://sunnewsonline.com cross river school girl 17….
- Snowdon, K. (2019). Assaults in schools soar by 72% in four years. https://schoolsweek.co.uk>assaults-in-schools-soar-by....
- SU-Min, L & Dongjoo, S. (2023). Bullying surges as Korea resumes in-school classes. *Korea Joontng Daily*, February 28, 2023.
- *The Guardian Nigeria*. (2018) Rising cases of child rape in Nigerian schools. www.guardian.ng.
- Umeh, K. (2022). 85% of Nigerian children suffer violent discipline in schools-UNICEF. *The Guardian*, 02 August, 2022. https://guardian.ng>news.
- Volk, A.A., Dane, A.V. & Marini, Z. (2014). What is bullying? A theoretical redefinition. *Developmental Review*, 34(4), 327-343.
- *Wikipedia: The free Encyclopedia* (2013). Yobe state school shooting, en.m.wikipedia.org-wiki.
- *Wikipedia: The free Encyclopedia*. (2011). Boko Haram. en.m.Wikipedia.org.
- Zyl, M.V. (2022). Crime state /stats reveal children are not safe at schools – *Democratic Alliance*. https://www.da.org.za-2022/11s.